

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1317
April 28, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding for the Business Ownership Lifecycle Initiatives in fiscal year 2022.

The entity to receive funding for this project is Western Illinois University, located at 3300 River Dr, Moline, IL 61265.

The funding would be used to expand the capacity of its Quad Cities (QC) campus to drive innovation and small business success along the business ownership lifecycle. WIU intends to do this in three ways: (i) Promote New Business Startups through Entrepreneurship Training, (ii) Help Existing Small Businesses enter New Markets through Procurement, and (iii) Encourage Late Stage Small Businesses to Create Business Succession Plans and Exit Strategies.

According to the most recent Illinois Small Business Profile published by the Small Business Administration (SBA), there were 1.2 million small businesses in Illinois. Small businesses employed 2.1 million people, representing 45% of the Illinois private sector labor force. In the 17th Congressional District there are counties such as Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Mercer, where 15% or more of the entire labor force is self-employed. This proposal builds on WIU current success as it reaches out to minority and women entrepreneurs in the Quad Cities and across northwestern Illinois. WIU plans to initiate local and regional procurement technical assistance to help small businesses, including minority and women-owned businesses, navigate the procurement process. This is an underserved market in the Quad Cities and northwestern Illinois. Finally, studies show a majority of small businesses do not maintain succession plans. This initiative would launch a region-wide business succession planning initiative that will include an online business succession-planning toolkit, a marketing strategy to ensure people know about the resource, and will deliver a series of business succession planning workshops in the Quad Cities and across the 17th Congressional District.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Respectfully,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress
April 28, 2021